

Clay Community Health Happenings

Nancy J. Mills, Administrator

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Clay County Health Department News

Sharing Experiences with New International Friends

On Monday, August 8, 2011 visitors from Brazil, Haiti, Sudan, Gambia and Bulgaria met SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) youth to learn how youth advocacy can be used in a successful tobacco prevention and control program. Officials from the Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program hosted the international panel and exchanged information on program strategies for reducing the burden of tobacco related disease on communities.

Clay County SWAT youth Kirby Keller, Nikita Sorbello & Taj Buckner, joined Duval County SWAT youth Tory McGriff, Terica Slaughter & Kirk Blackwell to share their experiences engaging their peers on the health effects of tobacco use. "SWAT has been a great experience for me. Not only have I been able to help change my community, but I have received great skills development training on how to communicate with elected officials," said SWAT state youth advocacy board member Tory McGriff. "This program really gives us a chance to make change from our perspective."

"Our program has seen the current smoking rates decrease by 73.5% among middle school students and by 52.2% among high school students over the last thirteen years, in part contributed to youth-led activities," said Gregg Smith, the program manager for the state's tobacco control program. "Recently, following CDC guidelines, we have shifted focus to training youth how to affect local policy change to reduce youth and young adult smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke."



Local SWAT youth meet with international visitors through the GlobalJax International Visitor Exchange Program.

Pictured, left to right: Back Row- Mr. Lamin Kinteh, Gambia; Mr. Barry Lewis, GlobalJax; Ms. Gabriella Chagas, Brazil; Tory McGriff, Duval SWAT; Dr. Eman Ibrahim, Sudan; Mr. Gregg Smith, Florida Department of Health. Front Row- Mr. Stephen McCloskey, Duval County Health Department; Taj Buckner, Kirby Keller, Nikita Sorbello, Clay SWAT; Dr. Sheila Eustache, Haiti; Kirk Blackwell, Terica Slaughter, Duval SWAT; Ms. Maria Cherneva, Bulgaria

Learning ways to empower and engage youth activism was particularly interesting with the panel. Mr. Lamin Kinteh, Officer-In-Charge for the Gambia Family Planning Association, found common ground with youth. He works closely with youth in Gambia to empower them to participate in the decision-making process within their local community on issues of reproductive health. He commented, "I admire youth involvement and [it] is especially important for the younger ones to participate in health advocacy activities".

Ms. Maria Cherneva, a health reporter for the Bulgarian National Television station, asked the youth if they were popular among their peers. After the information exchange, she and the SWAT youth made a short video interview to explain the issue of Candy-Flavored Tobacco products, a product that was not widely known to the visitors. "This is not a good problem to have [Candy-Flavored Tobacco Products], we have doctors telling us not to smoke, but they still smoke - even in the hospitals," Ms. Cherneva commented.

The Florida SWAT program is in every county in Florida, with over 300 clubs and 7,000 members statewide. SWAT's



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mission is to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and deglamorize Big Tobacco. They are a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future. Youth ages 11-18 can join their local SWAT club. For more information, log on to <http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/get-involved/>.

Specific information on the tobacco policy initiatives Tobacco Free Clay is found at www.TobaccoFreeClay.com.

The international visitors are hosted by GlobalJax, the local partner for the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. The US Department of State's specific objectives for the project are to promote international cooperation on the common challenges facing the global community in preventing, treating and managing healthcare issues, as well as foster relationships to explore best practices in the future. GlobalJax brings over 200 visitors to Jacksonville from around the world every year. For more information about GlobalJax, visit www.GlobalJax.org.

Mosquito-borne Illnesses and Mosquito Prevention

CCHD Communicable Diseases program has increased surveillance in Clay County for West Nile Virus and Dengue infections. These infections are carried by

mosquitoes and people can be infected through the bite of an infected mosquito (mosquito-borne). Clay

County has no confirmed cases of West Nile Virus.

West Nile Virus symptoms can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and/or vomiting. Approximately 4 out of 5 (80%) of infected people have no symptoms.

The best way to prevent mosquito-borne illness is to take precautions to limit mosquito exposure and prevent mosquito bites.

CCHD and Florida Department of Health recommend the following measures to stop mosquitoes from living and multiplying around your home or business:

- *Drain* standing water from garbage cans, house gutters, pool covers, flower pots or any containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected
- *Discard* old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items not being used
- *Empty and Clean* birdbaths and pet water bowls at least once or twice a week
- *Protect* boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water
- *Maintain* the water balance (pool chemistry) of swimming pools. Empty

plastic swimming pools when not in use

Protect yourself from mosquito bites and the diseases they carry:

- *Cover* your skin with clothing if you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves.
- *Repellent* – apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon, eucalyptus, and IR 3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months.
- *Cover doors and windows with screens* – Keep mosquitoes out of your house, repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches and patios.

For more information consult your health care provider or access the following web sites:

- <http://myfloridaeh.com/medicine/index.html>
- <http://www.myfloridaeh.com/medicine/arboviral/index.html>
- http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list_mosquitoborne.htm
- <http://healthyclaycounty.org/>



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